

Madame Speaker:

When the American people in this Congress stand in unity, great change is possible. Last Fall, from every corner of our nation, we spoke loud and clear to demand an end to the Bush Administration's open-ended stay the course policy in Iraq and start a new direction.

That unity has changed the control of this very Congress, led to the departure of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and helped drive the bipartisan consensus behind the Iraq Study Group Recommendations.

Yet the Bush administration in response proposes another escalation - a so called surge. As I said last month on this floor, the escalation plan flies in the face of military experts, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, Democrat and Republican leaders and the American public.

This Congress has a solemn duty to listen and take action. Recently, the mother of a young soldier being deployed back to Iraq told me, "Congressman Carnahan, I am one of those mothers who is against the war in Iraq, but my son volunteered to serve his country. Please be sure they get the support and equipment they need to come home quickly and safely."

That mother's heartfelt request is a powerful example of our national unity and resolve to support our troops and oppose the escalation policy that is not making the Iraqi government more self reliant, not making the Middle East region more stable and not making our country safer.

Next week, after this Iraq war has extended longer than World War II, this Congress will have a historic long and thorough debate about the escalation plan. I believe the result will be a bipartisan vote reflecting the reality that a fourth U.S. escalation is the wrong direction for our country.

When this Congress acts in unison with the American people, great change is possible. In the

weeks and months ahead, I believe this Congress will undertake its Constitutional responsibilities with all seriousness and dispatch: to continue this solemn debate, to exercise detailed oversight and to use the tools available to it to change the direction of the war, to support our troops, to de-escalate the war, and to escalate the political solution in Iraq.

Working together, great change is possible. Madame Speaker, I yield back.